

# Impact Report

2020/21

# The Difference We Made

**During this extraordinary year of lockdowns and constant change, the M6 team mantra became ‘let’s do what we can do, safely’: proactively manage risk, respond to need, and embrace innovative ways of working to survive in whatever new landscape emerges in performance for young audiences (PYA).**

## We recommitted to:

1. Making ambitious, original theatre with, for and by children and young people that is engaging, multi-layered, and nurtures empathy, respect and emotional literacy.
2. Ensuring our work reaches and is relevant to our local community and under-served audiences in areas of low arts engagement and multiple deprivations.
3. Building on our 40+ year track record, using theatre as a tool for positive change that unlocks the potential of children and young people and responds to the challenges of living in contemporary Britain and the modern world.
4. Championing diversity and nurturing creative talent, especially under-represented artists and diverse new voices.
5. Expanding our reach and impact by listening to and respectfully learning from a range of collaborative partners, children and adult experts.
6. Using our position to address the biggest challenges of our time: environmental responsibility, cultural education and equality.



From our base in Rochdale, we pledged to make the most of what we had to ensure that M6 and the PYA sector survives: to help rebalance cultural deprivation, reignite the imaginations and ambitions of our young people, and nourish strategic partnerships.

Whilst many organisations had to furlough entire teams of staff, our small team continued to operate at 80% capacity. We swiftly adapted delivery plans to new digital interventions, supporting underserved children, young people and their families. We developed a range of new products, projects and services, responding to need and supporting freelance creative artists. As a result, we have increased our visibility, reach, impact and partner relationships, an exceptional silver lining which deserves recognition.

The highlights capture the output and impact but none of this could have been achieved without our amazing, dedicated and highly-skilled team of staff and board, along with our funders. We thank them for their resilience, adaptability and belief that together we could continue to make a positive difference in the most challenging of times.

**Simon Whitehead** Chair

**Deborah Palmer** Managing Director and joint CEO

**Gilly Baskeyfield** Artistic Director and joint CEO



We are extremely lucky to have M6 and its staff in our Borough. Well done all!”

**James Carey, St Mary’s CE Primary School (Linking Schools)**



# Our Year in Numbers

80

Speech Bubbles  
participants

7667

When We Started Singing  
virtual tour audience

269

Schools  
engaged

21,817

When We Started  
Singing Linking  
Network audience

6974

Love in the Time of Corona  
online audience

17

When We Started Singing  
virtual tour venues

765

Children participated  
in Linking Schools

377

Live audience  
members

107

ONLINE  
WORKSHOPS

26

NEW ONLINE  
PRODUCTS

1

CHRISTMAS  
RESIDENCY



78

Paid opportunities  
for freelancers

61,673

TOTAL ONLINE AUDIENCE

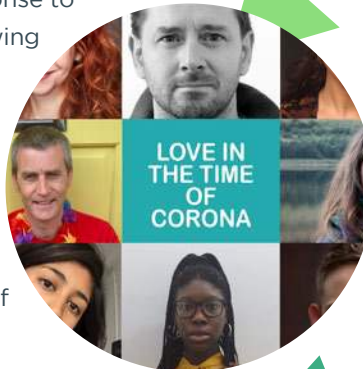
# Highlights

Despite the odds, we managed a live one-week Christmas residency of **Little Gift** (ages 3+) at **The North Wall, Oxford**.

Created and streamed **Love in the Time of Corona**, ten brand new monologues written for young audiences in response to the pandemic. These new works were produced following an online competition, open to writers of any experience. A range of educational resources were also created and sent to 68 primary and 14 secondary partner schools. The monologues were used by **Story Box Theatre** in Todmorden to support young people in achieving their Silver Arts Award and **This Corona Chick** was performed live at an evening of performance by black artists at the **New Diorama Theatre**.

Alongside a 16-venue virtual national tour of **When We Started Singing** (ages 5+), children from culturally different backgrounds in 20 Rochdale primary schools connected to enjoy a zoom workshop and screening as part of the **Linking Schools** project. The **National Linking Network** also shared the package to schools in 28 different geographic areas nationwide. The film began life as one of the winning entries in M6's lockdown monologue writing competition. A BSL version was also created which was highly praised by the Deaf Education Service. In collaboration with **Rochdale Borough Council**.

Produced a brand-new film version of **The Storm**, after the live tour was cut short due to COVID. This single voice play and accompanying resource for Year 7s confronts issues surrounding climate change.



Streamed three archive shows to support home learning during lockdown: **Whatever the Weather** was accompanied by the local distribution of 2900 books and 5000 activity packs; **A Tiger's Tale** was also programmed as part of the Nottstopping festival at **Lakeside Arts**; and **One Little Word** received a limited release for local communities.

“Filled with tender kindness and the type of magic you can only experience at truly excellent plays”

**Audience Member (Little Gift)**



Supported four diverse **Youth Theatre groups** to meet online (and in the building when lockdown allowed) to devise their own original films and radio plays. These were shared online throughout the year. Three online masterclasses also took place for youth theatre members to learn skills in television production, continuity announcing and playwrighting.

Continued to work in partnership with **Barnardo's** to support young people living with disability to participate in our **Act to Shine** youth theatre group. Alongside online sessions, creative activity packs were produced to support participants when they were unable to attend sessions in the building.

Collaborated with **Proud and Loud Arts** and Chrissy Jones, an emerging learning disabled artist, to develop the next phase of Chrissy's TYA production **Shadow Girl**.

Signed a commitment with **MAST** to act and support Manchester to be a carbon zero city by 2038.



Continued to work in partnership with London Bubble to deliver **Speech Bubbles**, a series of workshops across four schools with small groups of KS1 children who have identified speech and language delay.

Supported zoom sessions for young people living with disability at **High Peak Community Arts** to further develop their climate change film script (to be filmed in June 2021).

Hosted performances of **You Don't Know Me But**, audio theatre from **Stute Theatre** and **B-Arts** performed live over the telephone. Stute Theatre were also mentored by M6 staff during the production process.

Supported two young people from Rochdale, along with **Touchstones** to produce **this place [of mine]**, a programme of digital art commissions which reimagine our high street led by **Future Everything**.

Produced and distributed **Let's Play**, a free book of creative games and activities for practitioners, teachers and parents.

Collaborated with **GMCA** and **RBCN** to create, fund and distribute 22,000 **Creative Care Packs** for young people to help mitigate digital poverty during lockdown.

Commissioned by **Rochdale Borough Council Early Help and Schools** to create a **Behind the Scenes at M6** film, highlighting hidden roles in arts organisations.

Began Research and Development at M6 Studio for **Pebble on the Beach** (ages 3+) ahead of a schools' pilot tour and national tour 2022.

Provided in kind support to **Women of Rochdale**, **Beggar's Belief**, **Ergon Theatre** and **Just to Feel Something**.



“Delightfully sweet production... should help children see the world a little differently”

**Chris Weigand, The Guardian (Whatever the Weather)**

“The next best thing to seeing your productions live”

**Audience member (Whatever the Weather)**



# Money



Revenue Funding  
**£202,987**



JRS Grant  
**£44,497**



Earned Income/  
Donations  
**£23,111**



Premises Costs/In-kind support  
**£58,882**



Income 2020-21  
**£489,333**



Artistic & Participatory Programme  
**£223,219**



Project & Emergency Funding  
**£118,573**



Film Tax Relief  
**£41,283**



Core Costs  
**£171,410**



Governance  
**£6,534**



Expenditure 2020-21  
**£460,045**



Operating Surplus  
**£29,288**



Reserves Brought Forward  
**£442,736**



Reserves Carried Forward  
**£472,024**



A full set of  
audited accounts  
is available on the  
website



# Future Plans

## Mavis Sparkle

**Ages 4+**

**Autumn 2021**

Touring to local schools and national venues. Over the past year we've learnt how important key workers are and Mavis Sparkle is no exception! A cleaner with an extraordinary story to tell, Mavis is on a journey north to see nature's biggest light show with her own eyes.



## Pebble on the Beach

**Ages 3+**

**Spring 2022**

Following a successful schools pilot, Pebble on the Beach will transport families across the UK to an unforgettable day at the seaside.



## The Storm

**Year 7**

**December 2021**

A Rochdale schools tour to support the Gaia installation and the Youth Climate Summit. The film and resource will also be made available to all Greater Manchester Secondary Schools and Sixth Form Colleges, free of charge.



“

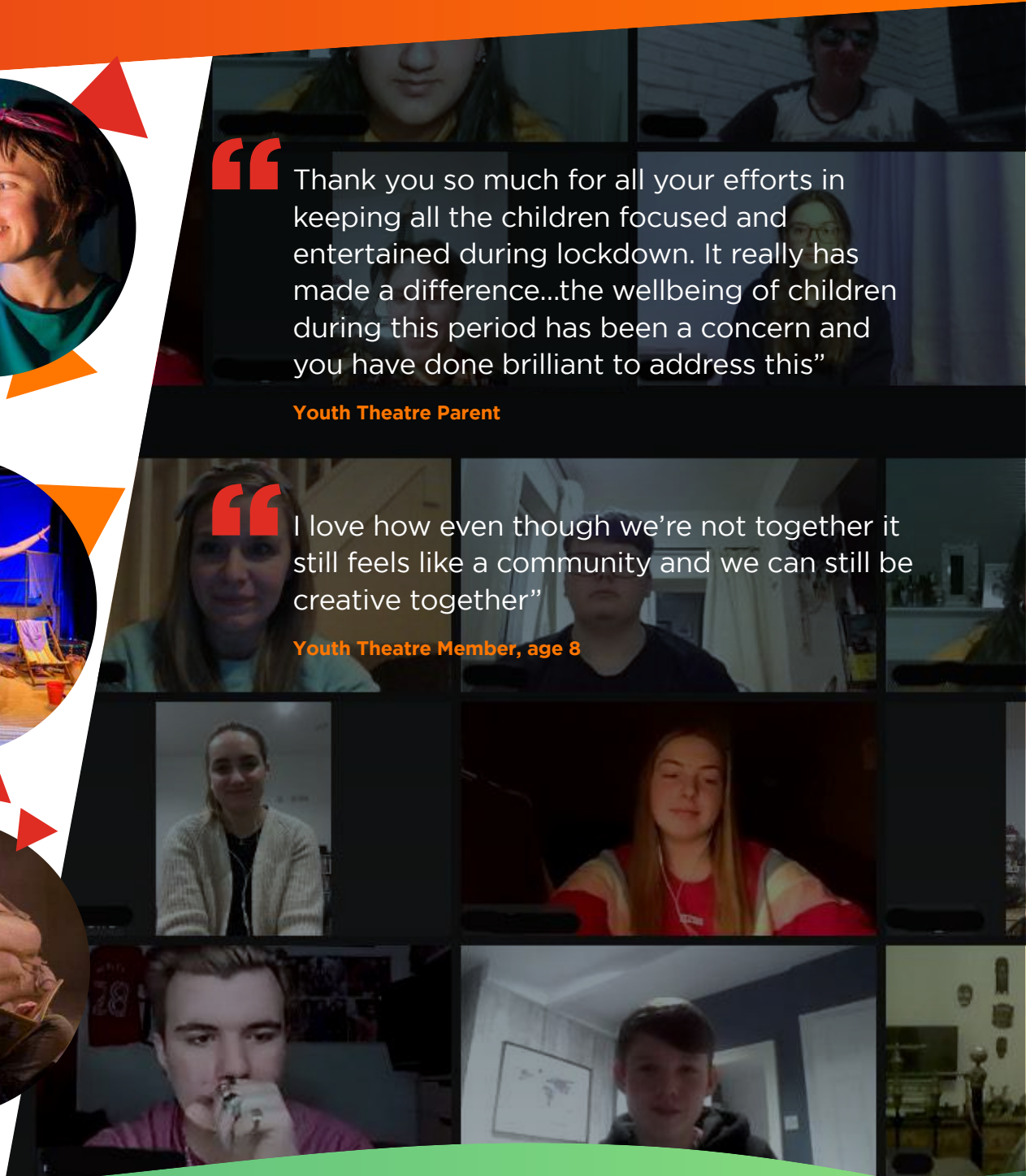
Thank you so much for all your efforts in keeping all the children focused and entertained during lockdown. It really has made a difference...the wellbeing of children during this period has been a concern and you have done brilliant to address this”

**Youth Theatre Parent**

“

I love how even though we're not together it still feels like a community and we can still be creative together”

**Youth Theatre Member, age 8**



# People and Partners Who Made Our Year

Alice Bunker Whitney Alison Heffernan Alistair MacDonald Amy Weston Andy Manley Angela Jackson Anna Friel Bronwyn Walker Caroline Kennedy  
Caroline Sheard Christophe Bride Cllr Billy Sheerin Danielle Frame David Haworth Declan Wilson Deborah Palmer Dot Wood MBE Eden Ehioghae  
Edward Jamil Eleanor Samson Emily Spowage Fiona Fogarty Gilly Baskeyfield Guy Hargreaves Hayley Konadu Ivy Chui James Atherton Jane Cox Jane  
Lalljee Jen Harris Jenni Morris Jill Welsby Joel Penn John Matzen Jon Nicolls Jonny Kelly Joss Matzen Kane Husbands Kash Arshad Katharine Jee Kirsty  
Johnson Lauren Dixon Leighton Wise Lewis Wileman Liz Mytton Lizzie Wilson Luca Woodcock Luke Walker Maria Major Mark Melville Mary Cooper  
Matthew Whittaker Mike Kenny Mike Peacock Morgan Forrester Muhammad Abdulaleem  
Radcliffe Naomi Sumner Nasrine Akhtar Nick Farrimond Nicola Ingram Nicola  
Latchana Nigel Gloudon Olwen May Owen Gayner  
Ramchurn Purvi Parmar Rachel  
Robin Parker Roy Alexander Wise  
Shaban Dar Shannon Wild Sharon  
Simon DeCoursey Simone Lewis  
Hatfield Sophie Parkes Stefan Escreet  
Tayo Akinbode TC Howard Tom  
Downes Abraham Moss Community  
Primary Ards Arts Centre Arts Council  
Barnardo's BBC Children in Need  
Brewhouse Arts Centre Brimrod  
Caldershaw Primary School CAN  
Curious Minds DANC Deeplish Academy Eden Court Ergon Falinge Park High School Family Grassroots Gathering Full House Theatre Future Everything  
Greater Manchester Combined Authority Healthy Young Minds Highlights Rural Touring High Peak Community Arts Holy Family RC Primary Kentmere  
Academy Kirkby Stephen Community Arts KYP Ladybridge High School Lakeside Arts London Bubble Made by Mortals Manchester Arts Sustainability  
Team Milnrow Parish CE Primary NHS CCG Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Paisley Arts Centre Proud and Loud Rochdale Borough Council Rochdale  
Borough Council Children's Services Rochdale Borough Council Early Help Rochdale Borough Culture Network Rochdale Connections Trust Sandbrook  
Community Primary Skylight Circus Arts Smithy Bridge Primary Springside and Hamer CP School St Luke's CE Primary St. Mary's CE Primary St. Mary's  
RC Primary St Peters CE Primary St. Thomas' CE Primary Stamford and Grantham Arts Centre Stute Theatre Theatre Clwyd Theatre Deli The Linking  
Network The Met The North Wall The Pappy Show The Tudor Trust Triple C Touchstones Woodland Primary Your Trust Z Arts



Muriel Gott Myiesha Amani Naomi  
McRoy Nicola Schofield Nicole  
Patrick Dower Penny Thompson Punam  
McBride Rebekah Mills Strawson Riz Ali  
Ryan Nolan Sam Jamil Sarah Nelson  
McWilliams Shirley Jamil Shona Reppe  
Simon Whitehead Sophia Chetin Sophia  
Sue Johnstone OBE Tamsyn O'Connor  
Hardman Tony Jackson Vinay Lad Will  
School Action Together All Saints CE  
England Ashfield Valley Primary  
Beggar's Belief Big Malarkey Festival  
Community Primary Broadfield Primary  
Cartwheel Arts Crossgates Primary



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 M6TheatreCompany

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With thanks to our funders:

